

RELIGIOUS OPINIONS.

Whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise think on these things.—Phil. 4th. 8th.

WINGS.

BY VICTOR HUGO.

What matters it? The life uncertain he To die? What thou'lt beget? He never reaches? What thou'lt fall and flee Have we not each a soul?

A soul that quickly must arise and soar To regions far more pure; Arise and dwell where pain can be no more And every joy is sure,

Be like a bird that on a bough too frail To bear him, only swings; He carols till the slender branches fall— He knows that he has wings.

PRISONERS OF JESUS CHRIST.

BY THEODORE L. CUTLER, D. D.

The Apostle Paul had a variety of signatures. Sometimes he signs himself "servant of Christ," sometimes "an apostle," and sometimes "an ambassador in chains." One day he wrote a letter—short and sweet—to the Colossian friend Philémon about his poor brother Onesimus. He looks at the letters on his wrist and at the Pretorian guard besides him and begins his epistle with the brave cheerful words, "Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ." He is not in bonds as an evil doer, but for well doing. He is the ambassador of a King infinitely greater than all Roman Cæsars, and, like John in Patmos, he is shut up in captivity for the testimony of Jesus. Therefore, as a brilliant preacher has truly said, "he wears his manacles as proudly as a bride might wear the bracelet which her husband had clasped on her arm." It is only his scarred and weather-beaten body that is bound; his imperial soul is free, and no happier man than he can be found within the gates of Rome.

Perhaps these lines may be read by many of God's people who are confined to their houses by chronic sickness or by the infirmities of age. In my own flock are several devoted Christians, who have not been able to enter the house of God for many years; some are too old to venture out, and others are suffering invalids. I am accustomed to call these the "prisoners of Christ," and when I visit them, it is as much for the good they do to me as for any good that I can do them. What eloquent sermons they preach to me on the beauty of submissive patience and on the supporting power of the "Everlasting arm!" How often have I gone out of these rooms of sickness, feeling utterly ashamed of myself that I ever murmured at anything, or even indulge in any complaints at the providential dealings of a loving God! One of these chronic sufferers is a sweet, refined and cultured young lady, who for long years has never had any other "outing" than to be removed from one room to another in her father's house. But wherever her bed of pain is placed, the blessed Jesus is with her. The Shepherd knoweth all his flock and just where each one of them is pastured; he calleth them all by name. Another of these prisoners of Christ has been kept from church for twenty years by intense rheumatic sufferings; yet the Lord of the sanctuary visits her, and feeds her with the sweetest of his heavenly manna. Sometimes when I quote some bright passage of consolation, or read some cheering psalm, a happy smile plays across her face which is distorted by the agonies of protracted disease. What are any of my poor sermons in comparison with her eloquent and majestic hymn of patience? To speak for Christ or to work for Christ is easy and pleasant; but to bear for Christ either pain or poverty or reproach with courageous patience is a far higher triumph of golly achievement.

Just why the loving Master confines some of his choicest and best in rooms of suffering and cripples others of them in body and in purse, we cannot always tell. One thing is very clear and that is that he does not mean to cripple their usefulness. No portion of Paul's wonderful career was productive of more solid results than the years of his imprisonment at Rome. He preached the kingdom of God to those about him until there were many converts in "Cæsar's household." He wrote seven out of his thirteen undisputed epistles while he was the prison chaplain under the eye of tyrant Nero's jailers—one of these was the epistle to Philippi which is the letter of gratitude for divine mercies and of exultant joy under sharp afflictions. If the cages of birds are sometimes covered up in order to make them sing, then the old hero was caged to furnish to the world one of its most melodious epics of sublime faith in Jesus. Satan afterward clapped John Bunyan into a prison and let out of the windows of Bedford jail floated the transcendent allegory of the "Pilgrim's Progress." Old John Brown, of Ossawatimie, did more while an imprisoned Samson in Virginia to pull down the pillars of the house of Negro bondage than if he had been at the head of an army of emancipation.

The service of Jesus Christ is not limited by any stress of circumstances. A sick chamber has often been made a chosen spot for glorifying God. The celebrated Halyburton, of Scotland, welcomed scores of visitors to that room in St. Andrew's, where they stood around his bedside and listened to words that seemed to be inspired by a glimpse of Heaven from the land of Beulah. None of his previous sermons equaled his discourses from that bed of suffering. "This is the best pulpit," said he, "I ever had. I am laid on this bed for this very end that I may commend my Lord." He called it a shaking hands with the King of Terrors. After a night of agonizing pain he said to his wife: "Jesus came to me in the third watch of the night, walking upon the waters, and beseid unto me, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, and I have the keys of death. He stilled the tempest in my soul and there is a sweet calm. I have ripened fast under the bright Sun of Righteousness, and have had brave showers. Now I

am thinking of the pleasant spot of earth that I will soon get to lie in; I will get my little Georgie in my hand and we will be a group of bonnie dust." After his voice failed him in the last moments he continued to clap his hands in triumph.

It is not only by such joyful testimonies to the sustaining power of divine grace or by cheerful patience that the prisoners of Christ have preached and are preaching his precious gospel. There are many ways of doing good open to invalids. During the years that the wife of Mr. Spurgeon was confined to her room she conceived the plan of providing commentaries and Bible-leaflets for poor ministers and village preachers. Last summer she told me that over one hundred thousand such volumes had been secured in response to her appeals. Charlotte Elliott composed her richest and sweetest hymns while she was one of Christ's prisoners. A large-hearted lady, shut in from her former activities out-of-doors, spends much of her time in folding and addressing little leaflets of awakening or of consoling truth to those who may be profited by them. In many a house there is a room whose silent influence is felt all over the dwelling. The other members of the family come in there to inquire after the sick sufferer, to bring some choice fruit or pleasant gift, to read aloud or watch with her through the lonesome night. From that room steals forth an influence that makes every one gentler and tenderer and more unselfish. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why God permits some of his children to suffer; they not only grow purer by the chastening, but become evangelists of blessings to others. Paul in his prison prompted many besides Onesimus to deeds of sympathy for him, and he evoked such gifts of kindness from his spiritual children at Philippi that he writes to them that their love "hath blossomed out afresh." That is the literal rendering of the message sent by the sunny-hearted old prisoner of Jesus Christ. Good friends, it matters little where we are so long as our inner life is hid with Christ and we keep it luminous with the joy of his presence.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

"HOBSON'S CHOICE."

Did you know that this familiar phrase, "Hobson's Choice," preserves the memory of a very good and useful man? Thomas Hobson was born in 1544; he was for sixty years a carrier between London and Cambridge, conveying to and from the University letters and packages, also passengers. In addition to his express business, he had a livery stable, and let horses to the university students. He made it a rule that all the horses should have according to their ability, a proper division of work and rest. They were taken out in regular order as they stood, beginning with the one nearest the door. No choice was allowed, and if any man refused to take the animal assigned him, he might go without any. That or none. Hence the phrase, "Hobson's Choice."

In the spring of 1630, the plague broke out in England. The colleges of Cambridge were closed, and among the precautions taken by the authorities to avoid the infection, Hobson was forbidden to go to London. He died in January, 1631, partly, it is said, from anxiety and fretting; at his enforced leisure. Hobson was one of the wealthiest citizens of Cambridge, and did much for the benefit of the town, to which he left several legacies. His death called forth many poems from members of the University, officers and students, among them two by the poet Milton, then a student of Christ's College.

NEVER TOO LATE TO LEARN.

Scrates, at an extreme old age, learned to play on musical instruments.

Cato, at eighty years of age, began to study the Greek language.

Plutarch, when between seventy and eighty, commenced to study Latin.

Boccaccio was thirty years of age when he commenced his studies in light literature; yet he became one of the greatest masters of the Tuscan dialect, Dante and Plutarch being the other two.

Sir Henry Spellman neglected the science in his youth, but commenced the study of them when he was between fifty and sixty years of age. After this time he became a most learned anti-quary and lawyer.

Dr. Johnson applied himself to the Dutch language but a few days before his death.

Ludovico Monaldeschi, at the great age of one hundred and fifteen, wrote the memoirs of his own time.

Ogilby, the translator of Homer and Virgil, was unacquainted with Latin and Greek till he was past fifty.

Franklin did not commence his philosophical researches till he reached his fiftieth year.

Drayden, in his sixty-eighth year, commenced the translation of the Æneid, his most pleasing production.

A STRINGENT ANTI-SALOON LAW.

The most radical law ever enacted against saloons in Missouri went into effect November 1st, and, if honestly enforced, will go far toward destroying their attractiveness. The law is popularly known as the Newberry Law, and since its passage has provoked a storm of criticism from the saloon keeper and widespread indorsements from the pulpit. The law, in substance, prohibits dice, cards, chairs or tables in saloons; pianos, banjos and musical instruments of all kinds are also prohibited. Singing in a saloon will be a misdemeanor. Pool-tables, billiard-tables and bowling-alley must go, and all games of chance for drinks or fun conducted in a saloon will be a misdemeanor. Sparring and wrestling are prohibited, and a license can be revoked upon conviction for any violation.

DEATH BED REPENTANCE.

Mr. Joseph Cook wisely remarks that "A death bed repentance is never to be encouraged before the time, or discouraged at the time." And this reminds us of what Lord Byron so felicitously says of that repentance for past sinning which loud tempests at sea produce.

"They vow to amend their lives, and yet they don't, Because if drowned they can't—If spared they won't."

J. E. HUSTON.

SHAKING HANDS.

BY JOSEPHINE POLLARD.

There is an art in shaking hands Not every body understands; And as they go through life untainted, The simple act expresses naught.

The fingers limp within our own A weak or responsive tone From the electric wire, that sends The hearty greeting to a friend.

But, oh, there is a simple touch, Gentle and soft, that means so much; The pulses of our soul are stirred, As if we heard the spoken word.

The outstretched hand, the hearty grasp, The fingers locked in loving clasp, Fresh strength and courage have bestowed To many a one along life's road.

Some lonely traveler it may be, Yearning for love and sympathy, And quick the sign is comprehended—"My heart is true, and I'm your friend!"

Thus one repels—another draws; And many are misjudged because Not one in twenty understands The gracious art of shaking hands.

MARRIAGE.

Men and women, and especially young people, do not know that it takes years to marry completely two hearts, even of the most loving and well sorted. But nature allows no sudden change. We slope away gradually from the cradle to the summit of life. Marriage is gradual, a fraction of us at a time. A happy wedlock is a long falling in love. I know young persons think love only belongs to brown hair, and plump, round, crimson cheeks. So it does for its beginning, just as Mt. Washington begins at Boston Bay. But the golden marriage is a part of love which the bridal day knows nothing of. Youth is the tassel and silken flower of love; age is the full corn, ripe, and solid in the ear. Beautiful in the morning of love with its prophetic crimson, violet, purple and gold, with its hopes of days that are to come. Beautiful also is the evening of love, with its glad remembrances, and its rainbow sad turned toward heaven as well as earth. Young people marry their opposites in temper and general character, and such a marriage is commonly a good match. They do it instinctively. The young man may say, "My black eyes require to be wed with blue, and my over vehemence requires to be a little modified with somewhat of dullness and reserve."

When the opposition come together to be wed, they do not know it, but each thinks the other just like himself. Old people never marry their opposites; they marry their similars, and from calculation. Each of these two arrangements is very proper. In their long journey these young opposites will fall out of the way a great many times, and both get away from the road; but each will charm the other back again, and by and by they will be agreed as to the place they will go to, and the road they will go by, and become reconciled. The man will be nobler and larger for being associated with so much humanity unlike himself; and she will be a nobler woman for having manhood besides her that seeks to correct her deficiencies and supply her with what she lacks, if the diversity be not too great, and there be real pity and love in their hearts to begin with. The old bridegroom having a much shorter journey to make, must associate himself with one like himself. A perfect and complete marriage is perhaps as rare as perfect personal beauty. A real happy marriage of love and judgment, between a noble man and woman, is one of the things so very hard to come by, as the Greek poet fabled, a god, he might stop the world in order to feast his eyes with such a spectacle.—Theodore Parker.

THE MINISTRY OF LITTLE CHILDREN.

"When our little boy died," has been the beginning of pilgrimage for many bereaved parents. "When the baby died," dates impressions on the family circle that have matured to godliness.

The old may outlive their friends; the middle-aged may make enemies who are glad to get rid of them, or, wandering off, die where none lament; but the babe is without prejudices in life, and mighty in death. It is God's messenger of reconciliation, His flag of truce in this world of enmities, and enmities, and wrath, and strife. It has strong hold on two hearts, if no more. The empty crib, the half-worn shoe, the soft locks of hair, that few may see, prolong the painful yet pleasing memory of the angel-visitor that looked in upon us and smiled, and went to Heaven, bidding us, amid care and sorrow, to follow on.

There is something so peculiarly affecting in the loss of a child that we sympathize with the parent who said he believed no minister prepared to bury another's child who had not buried one of his own.

There's many an empty cradle, There's many a vacant bed, There's many a lone home where Whose joy and light are fled; For tucked in every grave-yard, The little hillocks lie, And every little hillock represents An angel in the sky.

In this way heaven is receiving large contributions from earth. Next to the conversion of the soul, the enemy of God and man may take least pleasure in the death of a child. His snarls are all prevented, and his prey surely lost.

We bless God for our creation. The opening of a career of immortal existence is in itself a great event—a mission of praise and glory. Though the voice of praise swell as the sound of many waters and the celestial harpers are numberless, yet his ear detects each new voice and joyful string, and the praise of these little ones glorieth Him.

In this view, the babe, even for a few days, and sickly,—that goeth from the cradle to the grave—is of more intrinsic importance than material world.

A Hindu woman said to a missionary, "Surely your Bible was written by a woman." "Why?" "Because it says so many kind things for women. Our Shastas never refer to us but in reproach."

Parents who have watched by the couch of suffering innocence, and seen the desire of their eye taken away at a stroke, have found themselves busy running over the Scriptures for faith, and gathering up, as a stay of their hearts, what God has said for their little children. How full, and precious and unequivocal are the passages of comfort! The conclu-

sion is, surely the Bible was given by a parent. And so it was. He knows the heart of a parent, and works in it and by it to the glory of his grace. He weaves out of this exquisite material silken cords that draw mightily. He touches erring souls with this Divine popularity, and then sets the object of affection in the skies.

Oh, prattling tongues, never formed to speech, and now still in death, how eloquently you preach to us! Oh, little pattering feet, leading the way, how many, through rude and stormy scenes, are following after you to heaven! I thank God for your ministry, and if it be in vain, the fault and the loss will be all our own.—Bishop H. N. McTear.

CONSECRATED UMBRELLAS.

I hope you own one, my reader. It is not every Christian who does. I know a great many umbrellas that go constantly to office and store, to places of amusement, and to homes of friends, which are never seen at church on Sunday, or at prayer-meeting on Wednesday night.

When we ask the Lord to take and use "all that we are, and all that we have," we do not always mean our rainy Sunday selves and our umbrellas. Now, I am sure that there is no one who believes more heartily than I in that religion which makes one "diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." I cannot think very highly of that piety which is only for church use. But on the other hand the fervor of spirit which never carries us through disagreeable weather to the house of the Lord, does not deserve the name. If our umbrellas bear the inscription, "HOLINESS TO THE LORD," they will be taken out in Sunday's sprinkles, as well as in Monday's showers. If the Lord has given us umbrellas, waterproof cloaks, and overcoats (and what have we that we have not received?) then it is neither right nor grateful on our part to use these things only for our own running to and fro.

What would you think of your pastor if his umbrellas were not at the service of the Lord? What has your pastor a right to think of you? You need not be afraid of rain—the light which shines from under a consecrated umbrella cannot be quenched by rain-drops. Indeed, we sometimes get the richest and most abundant oil in our lamps on rainy Sundays, and our lights burn the brighter through all the coming week.

I am sure that Satan must know that consecrated umbrellas in consecrated hands are weapons hard to be withstood, so he makes us think (if we think of it at all) that our umbrellas are not worthy the oil of consecration. We know better; in future let us have the courage of our convictions.—Christian Observer.

GOOD FOR EVIL.

When the dog tax was first imposed in France, people set to work to get rid of their useless dogs. A Frenchman had an old Newfoundland dog, which he coaxed to the river side, told him to lie down, tied all his four feet together with a rope, and pushed him into the Seine. The dog, in his struggles, loosened the rope, and, with great difficulty and panting for breath, scrambled up the steep bank. There stood his master, stick in hand, to drive him back; he struck out at the dog, and then, coming to his senses, gave him a violent push, in doing which he somehow lost his own balance, and himself fell into the water. He hoped of life would have been very few indeed if the dog had not been "the better man of the two." But the dog, for getting the treatment he had just received, plunged of his own accord into the river, where he had so nearly met his death, and spent his remaining strength in saving his would be murderer. It was a hard struggle, but he came off conqueror, and the two walked home together—the one triumphant, the other, let us hope, repentant.

WHAT IS THE END OF LIFE?

The end of life is, not to do good, although many of us think so. It is not to win souls, although I once thought so. The end of life is to do the will of God. That may be on the line of doing good or winning souls, or it may not. The maximum achievement of any man's life after it is all over is to have done all the will of God. No man or woman can have done any more with a life; no Luther, no Spurgeon, no Wesley, no Melancthon, can have done any more with their lives; and a dairy maid or a scavenger can do as much. Therefore, the supreme principle upon which we have to run our lives is to adhere, through good report or ill, through temptation and prosperity and adversity, to the will of God, wherever that may lead us. It may take you away to China, or you who are going to Africa may have to stay where you are; you who are going to be an evangelist may have to go into business, and you who are going into business may have to become an evangelist. But there is no happiness or success in life till that principle is taken possession of.—Professor Drummond.

A WONDERFUL WIFE.

There was an old preacher once who told some boys of the Bible lesson he was to read in the morning. The boys finding the place, glued together the connecting pages. The next morning he read on the bottom of the page: "When Noah was one hundred and forty, he took unto himself a wife, who was (turning the leaf) one hundred and forty cubits long, forty cubits wide, built of gopher wood, covered with pitch inside and out." He was naturally puzzled at this. He read again, verified it, and then said: "My friends, this is the first time I ever met this in the Bible, but I accept it as an evidence of an assertion that we are fearfully and wonderfully made."—Exchange.

PER PACEM AD LUCEM.

BY A. A. PROCTOR.

I do not ask, O Lord, that life may be A pleasant road; I do not ask that thou wouldst take from me Aught of its load; I do not ask that flowers should fall away spring Beneath my feet; I know too well the poison and the sting Of things too good, too sweet.

For one thing only, Lord, I plead— Lead me aright; Through strength should filter and through heart should bleed, Through Peace to Light.

I do not ask, O Lord, that Thou shouldst shed Full radiance here; Give but a ray of peace, that I may tread Without fear.

I do not ask my cross to understand, My way to see— Better in the darkness just to feel Thy Hand And follow Thee.

For one thing only, Lord, I plead— Lead me aright; Lead me, O Lord, till perfect day shall shine Through Peace to Light.

QUEENS OF SHEBA.

In one of the Sunday-school lessons just ahead of us, we are to tell and be told that ancient story, so exhaustive in historic romance and in human interest—how, when Solomon was in all his glory, the Queen of the South was allured to take a long and wearisome caravan journey to see with her own eyes whether the reality answered to the fame and wisdom of this paragon of princes. Her main object was to "commune with Solomon of all that was in his own heart," and receive answers to her many questions. But, though going home laden with wisdom for future reflection and direction, her chief impression was derived from the universal and lavish displays of wealth and prosperity, of vast revenues, and of progress in all the arts of life.

To-day history is repeating itself on a grander scale and in the modern methods. "The Three Americas" have come to visit a greater than Solomon's Israel, and to confer on the many questions of political and economic wisdom which have already made this Union of ours "foremost in the files of time."

The coming conferences on matters of common interests among these representatives of a world of nationalities are looked forward to with high hopes of mutual instruction, profit and alliance. In fact, one would be rash to limit his conjectures of what may come of it all, as the era approaches when this "New World" is to be the world-center and throne, holding the earth for republican liberty, and for a peace which needs not to be ironed with warlike armament. We can readily conceive that here the great demonstration is to be made, how the nations of the earth may cast all their traditional barriers down, may come to organize their interests into partnerships rather than rivalries, may arm only for and against each other, till the vision is fulfilled—

"When the war drum throbs no longer, And the battle-flags are furled In the parliament of man, the federation of world."

But at present the Queens of Sheba are being conveyed about our Israel to see with their own eyes the vastness and beauty and resources of our domain, its stupendous natural phenomena, the greatness of its magic cities, its crops and minerals more marvelous in their gathering than in their growth, its ships more numerous than the sea-gulls of the shore, and its railroads which begin to overwork each other, and whose transcontinental lines have made the famous Roman and Alexandrian roads of old seem almost like baby work. Still more important, let us hope that they are having their eyes opened to the possibilities and the blessings of a truer republicanism than their own, and a purer Christianity. Being trained observers and thinkers, they cannot fail to carry home many a lesson of wisdom which political economy or invention cannot supply, and which can alone solve the riddle of American life and liberty. It is to be feared that these most important are not by any means the most apparent secrets; that little pains will be taken to show them the silent and unpretentious way of a wisdom of One greater than Solomon; in fact, that much which they will be called to walk about and to admire, will not be the real bulwarks and towers of our Zion. They will see much that will only hide those humbler foundations, and mislead them as to the true sources and the actual standards of American prosperity.

They will see the Hill of Zion built over with temples to Mammon and Moloch and Moloch and Chemosh and Ashtaroth, crowded in with those of Christ. They will be thrown among men and women, and social habits and maxims, which will give them small idea of a purer morality than their own. It is a pity that they will see little of the simple, pious, home life of the great mass of our people; the Christian family; the religious and peaceful Lord's Day; the country school; the Sunday school; the humble and innumerable charities and missions; the communities which have banished the saloon; the countless and copious Bible streams, to which are due so much of the greenness and fruitfulness of the trees which cover the land with groves of olive and cedars of Lebanon.

It should be a special and constant prayer while these envoys of the Americas are among us, that they may learn a truer, simpler, purer Christianity to tell their people of, and that we on our part, while awakening to the great possibilities of a closer intercourse and more common interest in worldly things, may be aroused to a deeper concern for their spiritual ignorance, superstition, low morality, and lack of Bibles and of evangelical instruction. The field was never so open, nor the work done so encouraging. There are decided signs of movement towards the light, and in the principal countries the fullest toleration and legal rights for Protestants, and yet in Brazil, with a territory equal to that of the whole United States, but a handful of evangelists are at work. In Chili, the corpulence of the South American sisterhood of States, a corresponding advance has been made in the higher progress; thirteen Protestant churches having been established while several native youths are just entering the ministry. In Venezuela, with 2,000,000 population, no Protestant missionary society has ever yet set up its tents, though Bible distributors have been sowing the seed. Bolivia and Ecuador

are likewise almost totally unoccupied. Shall not we recognize the religious needs of the Americas, and not less than those of the Asia and the Africa and the Oceania?

Let us get ourselves used to the thought and to this habit, so that we shall be prepared to do our part for Jesus, when 1892 shall bring the Shebas and Sabas of the whole world to our gates to behold our glory, and to learn by what wisdom we have come to all this greatness and felicity.

CROSSING THE RUBICON.

(The Rev. Hugh MacMillan, D. D., LL. D., F. R. S. E., to The Quiver.)

In every human life there is a Rubicon to cross. A critical moment comes, sooner or later, in which we have to pass from the old life to the new by an act which decides our fate and determines the whole nature of our future. There is no career so quiet and uneventful but this fateful moment occurs in it. It will come in the shape of temptation, or sorrow, or change; and the way in which this crowning trial will be met will be determined by the training that has been received from the previous routine of ordinary life. We learn in little things the lesson which becomes of powerful use in great events, and acquire in resistance to daily petty temptations the force of character which is to be called out into resolute vigor in critical experiences.

The best preparation for the crossing of any Rubicon is wrestling with God before-hand in prayer, like Jacob. If we succeed in getting the blessing of the Lord, we know that our path will be a victorious one; that our foes will become our friends, and the things that were adverse, favorable. We shall pass over into the new circumstances, knowing, it may be, but dimly what shall befall us, but having already in possession, wrought out in the very texture of our soul, through the trial in which we have been victorious; that faith in God which is the ground of our most absolute confidence and our largest hope.

But it may be that our Rubicon is of a different nature. It may be like David's, a flight from the consequences of our sin. We cross the brook of sadness because we have planted in our life some seed of evil, and are now reaping its bitter fruit. We have found that sins break the ties and sweet associations of life, and drives the soul into a dreary and lonely desert. The curse rises from the ground, and, like Shimei's, becomes articulate to us. We pass through the valley of the shadow of death. But such a crossing over the Kidron of the soul will be blessed, if it leads, as in David's case, to heartfelt abiding repentance; for the sin that creates a breach between us and others will only create, if we are truly penitent, a deeper friendship between us and Him whose blood cleanseth from all sin and whose love makes the sinner's sorrow—which would have been unavailing if it were only the sorrow of the world that worketh death—the straight and narrow way to higher holiness and purer happiness.

If the crossing of the stream has been to us as to Jacob and David, a decisive change of character and purpose, the waters will be a very baptism of purification, in which our old life will be carried from us down into the Dead Sea, and our flesh will come again like unto the flesh of a little child. We shall pass over to a Mahanaim, the Lord's host, from the valley of the shadow of death, led across the dark waters of sorrow to God's heart and to God's throne, and shall acquire, in the wrestling of the Jabbok, the earnest of the inheritance of the saints in life.

The passing through any trial that is sanctified to us is a crossing of the brook Kidron to the Gethsemane of the soul with Christ. Why is all sorrow so lonely? Why does it make a solitude around us and within us? Why does it withdraw us from our fellow-creatures and lead us into the desolate wilderness, where common experience and ordinary sympathy are unavailing? Is it not that we may be brought into nearer and tenderer relationship with Him who has felt the awful burden of human woe as no human being has realized it, and in all our afflictions is still afflicted? We are made capable of feelings which we cannot utter, and of pains and sorrows which we cannot share with others, because Jesus is the interpreter of our feelings and the sharer of our sorrows.

The cloud that shuts us out from the world, shuts us in more closely with Him, and in the very core of the cloud's darkness and loneliness, we behold the transfiguration of sorrow—a beauty and a glory such as we see not in all the fairest and brightest hours of life. The wilderness, where human help is farthest off, is the place where heavenly help is nearest, where the ladder is set up that reaches from earth to heaven, and the angel appears in the bush and ministers tenderly to our necessities, under the shadow of the juniper where we have lain down to die.

Life knows not such peculiar and gracious revelations of divine love, as the solitude of suffering into which we are withdrawn from our fellow-creatures to be more entirely alone with Himself. We have not to say to Him, "Couldst thou not watch with me one hour?" He is with us, a very present help in our time of need. It is no angel that strengthens us, but the Lord Jesus himself. The sorrow with which no stranger can intermeddle, may weep itself out on the bosom of the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. For us, there is no lonely, forsaken place in God's universe. We can say, "Alone, yet not alone, for the Saviour is with me," as we pass over the brook Kidron to share in the Gethsemane of the soul, the fellowship of his sufferings, as he shares the fellowship of ours.

Our own pain and sorrow will give us a fuller understanding of the sufferings of the Man of Sorrows, and bind us more closely to him; for nothing brings two beings nearer than a shared sorrow. And having thus drunk of the brook of sadness with him by the way, we shall yet lift up our head with him in bliss. We shall be with him, when "the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

The King of Portugal died last Saturday. His son, Prince Carlos, Duke of Bragança, succeeded to the throne.

SHE "DISPLAINS" IT.

BY JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

"Had, too!" "Hadin' neither!" "No contented Bess and May— Neighbor children who were boasting Of their grandmothers, one day.

"'Bail, too!' " "Hadin' neither!" "All the difference begun Hy May,' saying she'd two grandmas, While poor Bess had only one.

"'Had, too!' " "Hadin' neither!" "Tossing curls, and kinks of friz, 'How could you have to grandmothers When 'just one is all they is?'"

"'Had, too!' " "Hadin' neither!" " 'Cause of you had two," said Bess, "You'd 'displains' it." Then May answered: "My grandma's were twins, I guess!"

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

America is not the only country that is vexed and perplexed by the problem of religious education in public schools. France has been making an experiment in this matter within the last half dozen years that is well worth noting. In 1882 the law was passed completely withdrawing the public schools from the influence of the clergy, and substituting "moral instruction" in the place of religious, without defining in detail what the authorities understood by such "morality." One of the features of the present Exposition is a massive volume, compiled by the well known Protestant theologian and dean of the Paris faculty, Dr. Fr. Lichtenberger, from 358 official reports of school directors and inspectors sent in, by order of the government, for the purpose of learning how the law has been working. The result is severely disappointing to the advocate of purely secular education and of the substitution of vague and general principles of morals for positive religion. It is impossible to systematize the answer given; but it is clear that endless confusion prevails as to what "moral instruction" is, and that, in any shape or form, it cannot take the place of religious training. Positive Protestants, like Lichtenberger and Edmond de Pressense, acknowledge the failure of the secularization of the schools, but do not advocate a return to the old system, lest the Roman Catholic clergy be given once more the absolute control which they formerly possessed. But Pressense, in his *Revue Chrétienne*, declares that a morality not based upon a positive Christian foundation is absolutely valueless, and urges that this new "moral" instruction be banished from the schools, that the instruction in general be made as moral as possible; that religious instruction be imparted outside of the regular school hours in the school buildings themselves; and that, in general, the training of the coming generation in the principles of Christianity be advanced in every possible manner. It is exceedingly doubtful whether the authorities will take any steps in this direction.—Sunday School Times.

A WONDERFUL MAN.

A writer in the *Missionary* says: "Emin Pasha in Central Africa, is one of the most fascinating as well as valuable books relating to Africa; and a remarkable fact connected with it is, that though the author, so far as known, is not only alive, but in active service he is not even aware of the existence of the volume. In the centre of the equatorial province Emin Pasha has been practically shut away from the world, and for years at a time he has received no communication from without. But he has never (he has been able to send to his special friends, Professors Schweinfurth and Ratzel, and Doctors Felkin and Hartlaub, letters which have reached them, and which they feel to be of such value to the world that they have arranged and presented them in this volume of 547 pages. The journals cover the period from 1877 to April, 1887, although there are many gaps. The contributions to natural history contained in this volume would be sufficient to give fame to any man, but when we add to this the service of Emin Pasha as a military leader and governor, and his protracted and energetic efforts for the suppression of the slave trade and the amelioration of the condition of the people of the equatorial province, we are constrained to admit that he is one of the most wonderful men of his time.

"It was in 1878 that Gordon made Emin governor of the equatorial province, and the new ruler immediately undertook to redeem the district from the domination of slave traders. With great energy and patience he wrought until he had trained a native soldiery and had banished the slave traders from the province; and in 1882 he was able to show a net profit from his administration of £40,000 in place of the preceding annual deficit of not far from \$100,000. Regarding his administrative duties as of prime importance, he never suffered his intense love for scientific investigations to interfere with his work as a ruler. While throughout these letters to his friends there is a singular mingling of records of his administration with accounts of the wonderful flora and fauna of the province. It is clear that his heart is first of all fixed upon securing good government for the people over whom he is placed. Dr. Hartlaub, referring